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W. Bartholomew

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# EPIPSYCHIDION

*Price, 2s.*

[Mrs. Shelley classes *Epipsychidion* among the poems written in 1821 : in a letter to Leigh Hunt dated the 29th of December, 1820, and of which a portion is published in Hunt's *Correspondence* (Vol I, p. 160), she seems to refer to it as being already written ; but only seems, for the context of the letter, which is extant, shews that there is no reference to Shelley or *Epipsychidion* in the passage wherein those names were inserted by Thornton Hunt. Whatever be the date of completion, the poem was sent to Mr. Ollier, to be published, in a letter dated the 16th of February, 1821, printed in the *Shelley Memorials* (pp. 152-3), in which Shelley says, "The longer poem, I desire, should not be considered as my own ; indeed, in a certain sense, it is the production of a portion of me already dead ; and in this sense the advertisement is no fiction. It is to be published simply for the esoteric few ; and I make its author a secret, to avoid the malignity of those who turn sweet food into poison ; transforming all they touch into the corruption of their own natures. My wish with respect to it is that it should be printed immediately in the simplest form, and merely one hundred copies : those who are capable of judging and feeling rightly with respect to a composition of so abstruse a nature, certainly do not arrive at that number—among those, at least, who would ever be excited to read an obscure and anonymous production ; and it would give me no pleasure that the vulgar should read it. If you have any bookselling reason against publishing so small a number as a hundred, merely distribute copies among those to whom you think the poetry would afford any pleasure." It was printed as an octavo pamphlet, sewed, without wrapper, consisting of fly-title *Epipsychidion—Price, 2s.*, title-page (as opposite), 1 page of preface called "Advertisement" with stanza from Dante at back, and text pp. 7 to 31. There is an imprint at the back of the fly-title, as follows :—"London. Printed by S. & R. Bentley Dorset-Street, Salisbury-Square." The name of the lady, omitted from the title-page, was Viviani,—the convent that of St. Anne, Pisa. I have not been able to ascertain that there is in existence any finished MS. of *Epipsychidion*.—H. B. F.]







# EPIPSYCHIDION

VERSES ADDRESSED TO THE NOBLE

AND UNFORTUNATE LADY

EMILIA V.——

✕ NOW IMPRISONED IN THE CONVENT OF ——

L'anima amante si slancia fuori del creato, e si crea nel  
infinito un Mondo tutto per essa, diverso assai da questo  
oscuro e pauroso baratro.

HER OWN WORDS.

L O N D O N

C AND J OLLIER VERE STREET BOND STREET

MDCCCXXI.

My Song, I fear that thou wilt find but few  
Who fitly shall conceive thy reasoning,  
Of such hard matter dost thou entertain ;  
Whence, if by misadventure, chance should bring  
Thee to base company, (as chance may do)  
Quite unaware of what thou dost contain,  
I prithee, comfort thy sweet self again,  
My last delight ! tell them that they are dull,  
And bid them own that thou art beautiful.

## ADVERTISEMENT.

[BY SHELLEY.]

THE WRITER of the following Lines died at Florence, as he was preparing for a voyage to one of the wildest of the Sporades, which he had bought, and where he had fitted up the ruins of an old building, and where it was his hope to have realised a scheme of life, suited perhaps to that happier and better world of which he is now an inhabitant, but hardly practicable in this. His life was singular; less on account of the romantic vicissitudes which diversified it, than the ideal tinge which it received from his own character and feelings. The present Poem, like the *Vita Nuova* of Dante, is sufficiently intelligible to a certain class of readers without a matter-of-fact history of the circumstances to which it relates; and to a certain other class it must ever remain incomprehensible, from a defect of a common organ of perception for the ideas of which it treats. Not but that, *gran vergogna sarebbe a colui, che rimasse cosa sotto veste di figura, o di colore rettorico: e domandato non sapesse denudare le sue parole da cotai veste, in guisa che avessero verace intendimento*.<sup>1</sup>

The present poem appears to have been intended by the Writer as the dedication to some longer one. The stanza on the opposite<sup>2</sup> page is almost a literal translation from

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Rossetti translates this quotation from Dante thus: "Great were his shame who should rhyme anything under a garb of metaphor or rhetorical colour, and then, being asked, should be incapable of stripping his words of this garb so that they might have a veritable meaning." No doubt Shelley could have expound-

ed the meaning of every line in this most wondrous poem, the main charge against which is that there are some few personal allusions that it is impossible to expound with certainty in his absence.

<sup>2</sup> From the word *opposite* being employed here in Shelley's edition, it may be fairly assumed that, although the

Dante's famous Canzone

*Voi, ch' intendendo, il terzo ciel movete, &c.*

The presumptuous application of the concluding lines to his own composition will raise a smile at the expense of my unfortunate friend: be it a smile not of contempt, but pity.<sup>1</sup>

S.

stanza was printed on the back of the "advertisement," he meant it to be on the back of the title-page; and I accordingly give it there,—as indeed, Mrs. Shelley, in her first edition of 1839, gave it at the back of a fly-title, and facing the "advertisement." In her second edition of 1839 it preceded the "advertisement," on the same page; and the wording was curiously changed to *on the above page*. Mr. Rossetti also prints the stanza above the "advertisement," on the same page, but makes a still more curious variation of Shelley's text by reading *on the preceding page*, instead of *on the opposite page*.

<sup>1</sup> Writing to Mr. John Gisborne from Pisa on the 22nd of October, 1821, Shelley said (*Essays, &c.*, Vol. II., p. 333-4), "The Epipsychidion is a mystery; as to real flesh and blood, you know I do not deal in those articles; you might as well go to a gin shop for a leg of mutton, as expect anything human or earthly from me. I desired Ollier not to circulate this piece except to the *ouveiroi*, and even they, it seems, are inclined to approximate me to the circle of a servant girl and her sweetheart. But I intend to write a symposium of my own to set all this right."

## EPIPSYCHIDION<sup>1</sup>

---

SWEET Spirit! Sister of that orphan one,  
Whose empire is the name thou weepest on,<sup>2</sup>  
In my heart's temple I suspend to thee  
These votive wreaths of withered memory.

Poor captive bird! who, from thy narrow cage, 5  
Pourest such music, that it might assuage  
The rugged hearts of those who prisoned thee,  
Were they not deaf to all sweet melody;  
This song shall be thy rose: its petals pale  
Are dead, indeed, my adored Nightingale! 10  
But soft and fragrant is the faded blossom,  
And it has no thorn left to wound thy bosom.

<sup>1</sup> The meaning of this title has been much discussed. Without pretending to any classical authority, I may note that I cannot discern any signification beyond the simple one, "a little poem about the soul."

<sup>2</sup> There ought to be no need of explanation here; but Mr. Rossetti says "the couplet has often been cited as unintelligible,"—owing, probably, to that fruitful source of mystification and corruption, the foot-note wherein Professor Craik (*English Literature and Language*, Vol. II., pp. 498—500) lays down, among other absurdities, that "it is difficult not to suspect something wrong" in this "strange commencement," as he calls it. There can be no reasonable doubt that Mr. Garnett's explanation (*Relics of Shelley*, p. 97) is right: "The

orphan one, Emilia's spiritual sister, is Mary Shelley, whose mother died, in giving her birth; the name is Shelley's own." When Mr. Rossetti's edition was reviewed in *The Times*, occasion was given to Mr. Garnett to address to the editor of that Journal a disclaimer as to a motive which the reviewer ascribed to this very simple explanation. Mr. Garnett's letter settles the question, if it was not settled before: he says—"I proposed, or rather stated, my interpretation simply because I knew it to be right. Its correctness is shown by the circumstance that Emilia Viviani and Mrs. Shelley were accustomed to address each other as 'sisters.' Many letters from the former to the latter are preserved, in all of which Mrs. Shelley is addressed as 'Cara Sorella.'"

High, spirit-wingèd Heart! who dost for ever  
 Beat thine unfeeling bars with vain endeavour,  
 Till<sup>1</sup> those bright plumes of thought, in which arrayed  
 It over-soared this low and worldly shade, 16  
 Lie shattered; and thy panting, wounded breast  
 Stains with dear blood its unmaternal nest!  
 I weep vain tears: blood would less bitter be,  
 Yet poured forth gladlier, could it profit thee. 20

Seraph of Heaven! too gentle to be human,  
 Veiling beneath that radiant form of Woman  
 All that is insupportable in thee  
 Of light, and love, and immortality!  
 Sweet Benediction in the eternal Curse! 25  
 Veiled Glory of this lampless Universe!  
 Thou Moon beyond the clouds! Thou living Form  
 Among the Dead! Thou Star above the Storm!  
 Thou Wonder, and thou Beauty, and thou Terror!  
 Thou Harmony of Nature's art! Thou Mirror 30  
 In whom, as in the splendour of the Sun,  
 All shapes look glorious which thou gazest on!  
 Aye,<sup>2</sup> even the dim words which obscure thee now  
 Flash, lightning-like, with unaccustomed glow;  
 I pray thee that thou blot from this sad song 35  
 All of its much mortality and wrong,  
 With those clear drops, which start like sacred dew  
 From the twin lights thy sweet soul darkens through,  
 Weeping, till sorrow becomes ecstasy:  
 Then smile on it, so that it may not die. 40

I never thought before my death to see  
 Youth's vision thus made perfect. Emily,  
 I love thee; though the world by no thin name

<sup>1</sup> In Shelley's edition, '*Till*.'

<sup>2</sup> In Shelley's edition, *Ay*; but he

habitually spelt the word with a final *e*.

Will hide that love, from its unvalued shame.  
 Would we two had been twins of the same mother! 45  
 Or, that the name my heart lent to another  
 Could be a sister's bond for her and thee,  
 Blending two beams of one eternity!  
 Yet were one lawful and the other true,  
 These names, though dear, could paint not, as is due,  
 How beyond refuge I am thine. Ah me! 51  
 I am not thine: I am a part of *thee*.

Sweet Lamp! my moth-like Muse has burnt its wings;  
 Or, like a dying swan who soars and sings,  
 Young Love should teach Time, in his own grey style,  
 All that thou art. Art thou not void of guile, 56  
 A lovely soul formed to be blest and bless?  
 A well of sealed and secret happiness,  
 Whose waters like blithe light and music are,  
 Vanquishing dissonance and gloom? A Star 60  
 Which moves not in the moving Heavens, alone?  
 A smile amid dark frowns? a gentle tone  
 Amid rude voices? a belovèd light?  
 A Solitude, a Refuge, a Delight?  
 A Lute, which those whom love has taught to play 65  
 Make music on, to soothe the roughest day  
 And lull fond grief asleep? a buried treasure?  
 A cradle of young thoughts of wingless pleasure?  
 A violet-shrouded grave of Woe?—I measure  
 The world of fancies, seeking one like thee, 70  
 And find—alas! mine own infirmity.

She met me, Stranger, upon life's rough way,  
 And lured me towards sweet Death; as Night by Day,  
 Winter by Spring, or Sorrow by swift Hope,  
 Led into light, life, peace. An antelope, 75  
 In the suspended impulse of its lightness,

Were less ætherially<sup>1</sup> light: the brightness  
 Of her divinest presence trembles through  
 Her limbs, as underneath a cloud of dew  
 Embodied in the windless Heaven of June 80  
 Amid the splendour-wingèd stars, the Moon  
 Burns, inextinguishably beautiful:  
 And from her lips, as from a hyacinth full  
 Of honey-dew, a liquid murmur drops,  
 Killing the sense with passion; sweet as stops 85  
 Of planetary music heard in trance.  
 In her mild lights the starry spirits dance,  
 The sun-beams of those wells which ever leap  
 Under the lightnings of the soul—too deep  
 For the brief fathom-line of thought or sense. 90  
 The glory of her being, issuing thence,  
 Stains the dead, blank, cold air with a warm shade  
 Of unentangled intermixture, made  
 By Love, of light and motion: one intense  
 Diffusion, one serene Omnipresence, 95  
 Whose flowing outlines mingle in their flowing  
 Around her cheeks and utmost fingers glowing  
 With the unintermitted blood, which there  
 Quivers, (as in a fleece of snow-like air  
 The crimson pulse of living morning quiver,)<sup>2</sup> 100  
 Continuously prolonged, and ending never,  
 Till they are lost, and in that Beauty furl'd  
 Which penetrates and clasps and fills the world;  
 Scarce visible from extreme loveliness.

<sup>1</sup> In Shelley's edition, *ethereally*.

<sup>2</sup> So in Shelley's and all editions up to Mr. Rossetti's, wherein the line is changed to—

The crimson pulse of living Morn may quiver,

and it is suggested in a note that the words *morn may* "might easily be misread and misprinted as" *morning*. No doubt they might: yet I incline to the supposition that the line stands in the first edition as Shelley meant it to stand, and that this is another case in which he uses the subjunctive mood

after a word which is not generally followed by that mood. See my note on *when the moon, . . . pause*, in *Laon and Cythna* (Vol. I., p. 224). Notwithstanding the "horrid violation of grammar," as Mr. Rossetti calls it, the magic of Shelley's euphony seems to me here, as in that case, to vanish with his editor's rectification. My brother, Alfred Forman, suggests that Shelley used *pulse* here as a plural, with a poetic instinct that, if that was not the plural, it ought to be.



Warm fragrance seems to fall from her light dress, 105  
 And her loose hair; and where some heavy tress  
 The air of her own speed has disentwined,  
 The sweetness seems to satiate the faint wind;  
 And in the soul a wild odour is felt,  
 Beyond the sense, like fiery dews that melt 110  
 Into the bosom of a frozen bud.—  
 See where she stands! a mortal shape indued  
 With love and life and light and deity,  
 And motion which may change but cannot die;  
 An image of some bright Eternity; 115  
 A shadow of some golden dream; a Splendour  
 Leaving the third sphere pilotless; a tender  
 Reflection of<sup>1</sup> the eternal Moon of Love  
 Under whose motions life's dull billows move;  
 A Metaphor of Spring and Youth and Morning; 120  
 A Vision like incarnate April, warning,  
 With smiles and tears, Frost the Anatomy  
 Into his summer grave.

Ah, woe is me!

What have I dared? where am I lifted? how  
 Shall I descend, and perish not? I know 125  
 That Love makes all things equal: I have heard  
 By mine own heart this joyous truth averred:  
 The spirit of the worm beneath the sod  
 In love and worship, blends itself with God.

Spouse! Sister! Angel! Pilot of the Fate 130  
 Whose course has been so starless! O too late  
 Belovèd! O too soon adored, by me!  
 For in the fields of immortality  
 My spirit should at first have worshipped thine,  
 A divine presence in a place divine; 135

<sup>1</sup> In Mrs. Shelley's editions we read *on for of*. Mr. Rossetti reverts to the reading of Shelley's edition, *of*, which is of course right.

Or should have moved beside it on this earth,  
 A shadow of that substance, from its birth ;  
 But not as now :---I love thee ; yes, I feel  
 That on the fountain of my heart a seal  
 Is set, to keep its waters pure and bright 140  
 For thee, since in those *tears* thou hast delight.  
 We—are we not formed, as notes of music are,<sup>1</sup>  
 For one another, though dissimilar ;  
 Such difference without discord, as can make  
 Those sweetest sounds, in which all spirits shake 145  
 As trembling leaves in a continuous air ?

Thy wisdom speaks in me, and bids me dare  
 Beacon the rocks on which high hearts are wreckt.  
 I never was attached to that great sect,  
 Whose doctrine is, that each one should select 150  
 Out of the crowd a mistress or a friend,  
 And all the rest, though fair and wise, commend  
 To cold oblivion, though it is in<sup>2</sup> the code  
 Of modern morals, and the beaten road  
 Which those poor slaves with weary footsteps tread, 155  
 Who travel to their home among the dead  
 By the broad highway of the world, and so  
 With one chained friend, perhaps a jealous foe,  
 The dreariest and the longest journey go.

<sup>1</sup> This line is so printed in all editions known to me. Mr. Rossetti says "It seems to me almost a certainty that the opening 'We' in this line ought to be cancelled." The irregularity strikes me, on the contrary, as peculiarly beautiful and characteristic.

<sup>2</sup> The word *in* is in Shelley's edition and in those of Mrs. Shelley and Mr. Rossetti. Professor Craik wanted it cut out (*English Literature and Language*, Vol II., p. 499), and cited in support of his view the fragment at page 319 of the second edition of 1839, wherein the line is printed without

the word *in*, correctly as he says ; but its incorrectness was finally demonstrated when Mr. Garnett, having access to the same MS. books from which Mrs. Shelley got the fragment, printed the line with the word *in* (*Relics of Shelley*, p. 34). Mr. Garnett gives the words *though 'tis in the code* ; but whether the abbreviation of *it* is his or Shelley's I have been unable to ascertain. It seems to me that Professor Craik's proposal had no claim whatever to be entertained : the doctrine referred to is not *the code of modern morals*, but only a part of it, and therefore *in the code*.

True Love in this differs from gold and clay, 160  
 That to divide is not to take away.  
 Love is like understanding, that grows bright,  
 Gazing on many truths ; 'tis like thy light,  
 Imagination ! which from earth and sky,  
 And from the depths of human phantasy, 165  
 As from a thousand prisms and mirrors, fills  
 The Universe with glorious beams, and kills  
 Error, the worm, with many a sun-like arrow  
 Of its reverberated lightning. Narrow  
 The heart that loves, the brain that contemplates, 170  
 The life that wears, the spirit that creates  
 One object, and one form, and builds thereby  
 A sepulchre for its eternity.

Mind from its object differs most in this :  
 Evil from good ; misery from happiness ; 175  
 The baser from the nobler ; the impure  
 And frail, from what is clear and must endure.  
 If you divide suffering and dross, you may  
 Diminish till it is consumed away ;  
 If you divide pleasure and love and thought, 180  
 Each part exceeds the whole ; and we know not  
 How much, while any yet remains unshared,  
 Of pleasure may be gained, of sorrow spared :  
 This truth is that deep well, whence sages draw  
 The unenvied light of hope ; the eternal law 185  
 By which those live, to whom this world of life  
 Is as a garden ravaged, and whose strife  
 Tills for the promise of a later birth  
 The wilderness of this Elysian earth.

There was a Being whom my spirit oft 190  
 Met on its visioned wanderings, far aloft,

In the clear golden prime of my youth's dawn,  
 Upon the fairy isles of sunny lawn,  
 Amid the enchanted mountains, and the caves  
 Of divine sleep, and on the air-like waves 195  
 Of wonder-level dream, whose tremulous floor  
 Paved her light steps;—on an imagined shore,  
 Under the grey beak of some promontory  
 She met me, robed in such exceeding glory,  
 That I beheld her not. In solitudes 200  
 Her voice came to me through the whispering woods,  
 And from the fountains, and the odours deep  
 Of flowers, which, like lips murmuring in their sleep  
 Of the sweet kisses which had lulled them there,  
 Breathed but of *her* to the enamoured air; 205  
 And from the breezes whether low or loud,  
 And from the rain of every passing cloud,  
 And from the singing of the summer-birds,  
 And from all sounds, all silence. In the words  
 Of antique verse and high romance,—in form,<sup>1</sup> 210  
 Sound, colour—in whatever checks that Storm  
 Which with the shattered present chokes the past;  
 And in that best philosophy, whose taste  
 Makes this cold common hell, our life, a doom  
 As glorious as a fiery martyrdom; 215  
 Her Spirit was the harmony of truth.—

Then, from the caverns of my dreamy youth  
 I sprang, as one sandalled with plumes of fire,  
 And towards the loadstar of my one desire,  
 I flitted, like a dizzy moth, whose flight 220  
 Is as a dead leaf's in the owlet light,  
 When it would seek in Hesper's setting sphere  
 A radiant death, a fiery sepulchre,  
 As if it were a lamp of earthly flame.—

<sup>1</sup> This comma is wanting in Shelley's edition.

But She, whom prayers or tears then could not tame,  
Past, like a God throned on a wingèd planet, 226  
Whose burning plumes to tenfold swiftmess fan it,  
Into the dreary cone of our life's shade ;  
And as a man with mighty loss dismayed,  
I would have followed, though the grave between 230  
Yawned like a gulf whose spectres are unseen :  
When a voice said :—"O Thou of hearts the weakest,  
"The phantom is beside thee whom thou seekest."  
Then I—"where ?" the world's echo answered "where !"  
And in that silence, and in my despair, 235  
I questioned every tongueless wind that flew  
Over my tower of mourning, if it knew  
Whither 'twas fled, this soul out of my soul ;  
And murmured names and spells which have controul  
Over the sightless tyrants of our fate ; 240  
But neither prayer nor verse could dissipate  
The night which closed on her ; nor uncreate  
That world within this Chaos, mine and me,  
Of which she was the veiled Divinity,  
The world I say of thoughts that worshipped her : 245  
And therefore I went forth, with hope and fear  
And every gentle passion sick to death,  
Feeding my course with expectation's breath,  
Into the wintry forest of our life ;  
And struggling through its error with vain strife, 250  
And stumbling in my weakness and my haste,  
And half bewildered by new forms, I past  
Seeking among those untaught foresters  
If I could find one form resembling hers,  
In which she might have masked herself from me. 255  
There,—One, whose voice was venomèd melody  
Sate by a well, under blue night-shade bowers ;  
The breath of her false mouth was like faint flowers,  
Her touch was as electric poison,—flame

Out of her looks into my vitals came, 260  
 And from her living cheeks and bosom flew  
 A killing air, which pierced like honey-dew  
 Into the core of my green heart, and lay  
 Upon its leaves; until, as hair grown grey  
 O'er a young brow, they hid its unblown prime 265  
 With ruins of unseasonable time.

In many mortal forms I rashly sought  
 The shadow of that idol of my thought.  
 And some were fair—but beauty dies away :  
 Others were wise—but honeyed words betray : 270  
 And One was true—oh ! why not true to me ?  
 Then, as a hunted deer that could not flee,  
 I turned upon my thoughts, and stood at bay,  
 Wounded and weak and panting ; the cold day  
 Trembled, for pity of my strife and pain. 275  
 When, like a noon-day dawn, there shone again  
 Deliverance. One stood on my path who seemed  
 As like the glorious shape which I had dreamed,  
 As is the Moon, whose changes ever run  
 Into themselves, to the eternal Sun ; 280  
 The cold chaste Moon, the Queen of Heaven's bright isles,  
 Who makes all beautiful on which she smiles,<sup>1</sup>  
 That wandering shrine of soft yet icy flame  
 Which ever is transformed, yet still the same,  
 And warms not but illumines. Young and fair 285  
 As the descended Spirit of that sphere,  
 She hid me, as the Moon may hide the night  
 From its own darkness, until all was bright  
 Between the Heaven and Earth of my calm mind,  
 And, as a cloud charioted by the wind, 290  
 She led me to a cave in that wild place,

<sup>1</sup> In Shelley's edition this line ends with a full-stop, doubtless a misprint.

And sate beside me, with her downward face  
 Illumining my slumbers, like the Moon  
 Waxing and waning o'er Endymion.  
 And I was laid asleep, spirit and limb, 295  
 And all my being became bright or dim  
 As the Moon's image in a summer sea,  
 According as she smiled or frowned on me ;  
 And there I lay, within a chaste cold bed :  
 Alas, I then was nor alive nor dead :— 300  
 For at her silver voice came Death and Life,  
 Unmindful each of their accustomed strife,  
 Masked like twin babes, a sister and a brother,  
 The wandering hopes of one abandoned mother,  
 And through the cavern without wings they flew, 305  
 And cried " Away, he is not of our crew."  
 I wept, and though it be a dream, I weep.

What storms then shook the ocean of my sleep,  
 Blotting that Moon, whose pale and waning lips  
 Then shrank as in the sickness of eclipse ;— 310  
 And how my soul was as a lampless sea,  
 And who was then its Tempest ; and when She,  
 The Planet of that hour, was quenched, what frost  
 Crept o'er those waters, till<sup>1</sup> from coast to coast  
 The moving billows of my being fell 315  
 Into a death of ice, immovable<sup>2</sup> ;—  
 And then—what earthquakes made it gape and split,  
 The white Moon smiling all the while on it,  
 These words conceal :—If not, each word would be  
 The key of staunchless tears. Weep not for me ! 320

At length, into the obscure Forest came  
 The Vision I had sought through grief and shame.  
 Athwart that wintry wilderness of thorns

<sup>1</sup> In Shelley's edition, *'till*.

<sup>2</sup> In Shelley's edition, *immovable*.

Flashed from her motion splendour like the Morn's,  
 And from her presence life was radiated 325  
 Through the grey earth and branches bare and dead;  
 So that her way was paved, and roofed above  
 With flowers as soft as thoughts of budding love;  
 And music from her respiration spread  
 Like light,—all other sounds were penetrated 330  
 By the small, still, sweet spirit of that sound,  
 So that the savage winds hung mute around;  
 And odours warm and fresh fell from her hair  
 Dissolving the dull cold in the frore<sup>1</sup> air:  
 Soft as an Incarnation of the Sun, 335  
 When light is changed to love, this glorious One  
 Floated into the cavern where I lay,  
 And called my Spirit, and the dreaming clay  
 Was lifted by the thing that dreamed below  
 As smoke by fire, and in her beauty's glow 340  
 I stood, and felt the dawn of my long night  
 Was penetrating me with living light:  
 I knew it was the Vision veiled from me  
 So many years—that it was Emily.

Twin<sup>2</sup> Spheres of light who rule this passive Earth,  
 This world of love, this *me*; and into birth 345  
 Awaken all its fruits and flowers, and dart  
 Magnetic might into its central heart;  
 And lift its billows and its mists, and guide  
 By everlasting laws, each wind and tide 350  
 To its fit cloud, and its appointed cave;  
 And lull its storms, each in the craggy grave  
 Which was its cradle, luring to faint bowers  
 The armies of the rain-bow-wingèd showers; 354

<sup>1</sup> In Shelley's and Mrs. Shelley's editions we read *froze*; but this is an obvious printer's blunder.

<sup>2</sup> So, in Shelley's edition; but *thin* in Mrs. Shelley's.



And, as those married lights, which from the towers  
 Of Heaven look forth and fold the wandering globe  
 In liquid sleep and splendour, as a robe ;  
 And all their many-mingled influence blend,  
 If equal, yet unlike, to one sweet end ;—  
 So ye, bright regents, with alternate sway 360  
 Govern my sphere of being, night and day !  
 Thou, not disdaining even a borrowed might ;  
 Thou, not eclipsing a remoter light ;  
 And, through the shadow of the seasons three,  
 From Spring to Autumn's sere maturity, 365  
 Light it into the Winter of the tomb,  
 Where it may ripen to a brighter bloom.  
 Thou too, O Comet beautiful and fierce,  
 Who drew the heart of this frail Universe  
 Towards thine own ; till, wreckt in that convulsion, 370  
 Alternating attraction and repulsion,  
 Thine went astray and that was rent in twain ;  
 Oh, float into our azure heaven again !  
 Be there love's folding-star at thy return ;  
 The living Sun will feed thee from its urn 375  
 Of golden fire ; the Moon will veil her horn  
 In thy last smiles ; adoring Even and Morn  
 Will worship thee with incense of calm breath  
 And lights and shadows ; as the star of Death  
 And Birth is worshipped by those sisters wild 380  
 Called Hope and Fear—upon the heart are piled  
 Their offerings,—of this sacrifice divine  
 A World shall be the altar.

Lady mine,

Scorn not these flowers of thought, the fading birth  
 Which from its heart of hearts that plant puts forth  
 Whose fruit, made perfect by thy sunny eyes, 386  
 Will be as of the trees of Paradise.

The day is come, and thou wilt fly with me.  
 To whatsoe'er of dull mortality  
 Is mine, remain a vestal sister still; 390  
 To the intense, the deep, the imperishable,  
 Not mine but me, henceforth be thou united  
 Even as a bride, delighting and delighted.  
 The hour is come:---the destined Star has risen  
 Which shall descend upon a vacant prison. 395  
 The walls are high, the gates are strong, thick set  
 The sentinels---but true love never yet  
 Was thus constrained: it overleaps all fence:  
 Like lightning, with invisible violence  
 Piercing its continents; like Heaven's free breath, 400  
 Which he who grasps can hold not; liker Death,  
 Who rides upon a thought, and makes his way  
 Through temple, tower, and palace, and the array  
 Of arms: more strength has Love than he or they;  
 For it<sup>1</sup> can burst his charnel, and make free 405  
 The limbs in chains, the heart in agony,  
 The soul in dust and chaos.

Emily,

A ship is floating in the harbour now,  
 A wind is hovering o'er the mountain's brow;  
 There is a path on the sea's azure floor, 410  
 No keel has ever ploughed that path before;  
 The halcyons brood around the foamless isles;  
 The treacherous Ocean has forsworn its wiles;  
 The merry mariners are bold and free:  
 Say, my heart's sister, wilt thou sail with me? 415  
 Our bark is as an albatross, whose nest

<sup>1</sup> In Shelley's edition, *it*: in Mrs. Shelley's, *he*. Mr. Rossetti follows this latter reading, and makes a further change by printing *his* in Italics. I think *it* is clearly right; for Love is

called *it* at the opening of the passage (line 398); and the sense intended seems to me to be that Love can burst Death's charnel, not its own charnel as Mr. Rossetti renders it.

Is a far Eden of the purple East ;  
 And we between her wings will sit, while Night  
 And Day, and Storm, and Calm, pursue their flight,  
 Our ministers, along the boundless Sea, 420  
 Treading each other's heels, unheededly.  
 It is an isle under Ionian skies,  
 Beautiful as a wreck of Paradise,  
 And, for the harbours are not safe and good,  
 This land would have remained a solitude 425  
 But for some pastoral people native there,  
 Who from the Elysian, clear, and golden air  
 Draw the last spirit of the age of gold,  
 Simple and spirited ; innocent and bold.  
 The blue Ægean girds<sup>1</sup> this chosen home, 430  
 With ever-changing sound and light and foam,  
 Kissing the sifted sands, and caverns hoar ;  
 And all the winds wandering along the shore  
 Undulate with the undulating tide :  
 There are thick woods where sylvan forms abide ; 435  
 And many a fountain, rivulet, and pond,  
 As clear as elemental diamond,  
 Or serene morning air ; and far beyond,  
 The mossy tracks made by the goats and deer  
 (Which the rough shepherd treads but once a year,) 440  
 Pierce into glades, caverns, and bowers, and halls  
 Built round with ivy, which the waterfalls  
 Illumining, with sound that never fails  
 Accompany the noon-day nightingales ;  
 And all the place is peopled with sweet airs ; 445  
 The light clear element which the isle wears  
 Is heavy with the scent of lemon-flowers,  
 Which floats like mist laden with unseen showers,

<sup>1</sup> In Mrs. Shelley's first edition of 1839, *girls* was printed for *girds* ; but *girds* was restored in the second edition of the same year.

And falls upon the eye-lids like faint sleep;  
 And from the moss violets and jonquils peep, 450  
 And dart their arrowy odour through the brain  
 'Till you might faint with that delicious pain.  
 And every motion, odour, beam, and tone,  
 With that deep music is in unison:  
 Which is a soul within the soul---they seem 455  
 Like echoes of an antenatal dream.—  
 It is an isle 'twixt Heaven, Air, Earth, and Sea,  
 Cradled, and hung in clear tranquillity;  
 Bright as that wandering Eden Lucifer,  
 Washed by the soft blue Oceans of young air. 460  
 It is a favoured place. Famine or Blight,  
 Pestilence, War and Earthquake, never light  
 Upon its mountain-peaks; blind vultures, they  
 Sail onward far upon their fatal way:  
 The wingèd storms, chaunting their thunder-psalm 465  
 To other lands, leave azure chasms of calm  
 Over this isle, or weep themselves in dew,  
 From which its fields and woods ever renew  
 Their green and golden immortality.  
 And from the sea there rise, and from the sky 470  
 There fall, clear exhalations, soft and bright,  
 Veil after veil, each hiding some delight,  
 Which Sun or Moon or zephyr draw aside,  
 Till the isle's beauty, like a naked bride  
 Glowing at once with love and loveliness, 475  
 Blushes and trembles at its own excess:  
 Yet, like a buried lamp, a Soul no less  
 Burns in the heart of this delicious isle,  
 An atom of th' Eternal, whose own smile  
 Unfolds itself, and may be felt,<sup>1</sup> not seen 480  
 O'er the grey rocks, blue waves, and forests green,  
 Filling their bare and void interstices.—

<sup>1</sup> This comma is wanting in Shelley's edition.

But the chief marvel of the wilderness  
 Is a lone dwelling, built by whom or how  
 None of the rustic island-people know : 485  
 'Tis not a tower of strength, though with its height  
 It overtops the woods ; but, for delight,  
 Some wise and tender Ocean-King, ere crime  
 Had been invented, in the world's young prime,  
 Reared it, a wonder of that simple time, 490  
 An envy of the isles, a pleasure-house  
 Made sacred to his sister and his spouse.  
 It scarce seems now a wreck of human art,  
 But, as it were Titanic ; in the heart  
 Of Earth having assumed its form, then grown 495  
 Out of the mountains, from the living stone,  
 Lifting itself in caverns light and high :  
 For all the antique and learned imagery  
 Has been erased, and in the place of it  
 The ivy and the wild-vine interknit 500  
 The volumes of their many twining<sup>1</sup> stems ;  
 Parasite flowers illumine with dewy gems  
 The lampless halls, and when they fade, the sky  
 Peeps through their winter-woof<sup>2</sup> of tracery  
 With Moon-light patches, or star atoms keen, 505  
 Or fragments of the day's intense serene ;—  
 Working mosaic on their Parian floors.  
 And, day and night, aloof, from the high towers  
 And terraces, the Earth and Ocean seem  
 To sleep in one another's arms, and dream 510

<sup>1</sup> These are two words in Shelley's edition ; but in Mrs. Shelley's first edition of 1839 we read *many-twining*, as also in Mr. Rossetti's. It is a likely enough compound word for Shelley to use ; but the original reading is so perfectly safe and sound, that there can be but little excuse for, or safety in, emendation.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Rossetti "cannot help suspecting that Shelley wrote '*inter-woof*.'" I am satisfied that *winter-woof* is right,—having reference to the distinction between the *tracery* of bare stems seen against the sky in winter and the *massing* of the foliage in flower-time.

Of waves, flowers, clouds, woods, rocks, and all that we  
Read in their smiles, and call reality.

This isle and house are mine, and I have vowed  
Thee to be lady of the solitude. ---  
And I have fitted up some chambers there 515  
Looking towards the golden Eastern air,  
And level with the living winds, which flow  
Like waves above the living waves below. ---  
I have sent books and music there, and all  
Those instruments with which high spirits call 520  
The future from its cradle, and the past  
Out of its grave, and make the present last  
In thoughts and joys which sleep, but cannot die,  
Folded within their own eternity.  
Our simple life wants little, and true taste 525  
Hires not the pale drudge Luxury, to waste  
The scene it would adorn, and therefore still,  
Nature with all her children, haunts the hill.  
The ring-dove, in the embowering ivy, yet  
Keeps up her love-lament, and the owls flit 530  
Round the evening tower, and the young stars glance  
Between the quick bats in their twilight dance;  
The spotted deer bask in the fresh moon-light  
Before our gate, and the slow, silent night  
Is measured by the pants of their calm sleep. 535  
Be this our home in life, and when years heap  
Their withered hours, like leaves, on our decay,  
Let us become the over-hanging day,  
The living soul of this Elysian isle,  
Conscious, inseparable, one. Meanwhile 540  
We two will rise, and sit, and walk together,  
Under the roof of blue Ionian weather,  
And wander in the meadows, or ascend

The mossy mountains, where the blue heavens bend  
 With lightest winds, to touch their paramour ; 545  
 Or linger, where the pebble-paven shore,  
 Under the quick, faint kisses of the sea  
 Trembles and sparkles as with ecstasy,<sup>1</sup>---  
 Possessing and possest by all that is  
 Within that calm circumference of bliss, 550  
 And by each other, till to love and live  
 Be one : --- or, at the noontide hour, arrive  
 Where some old cavern hoar seems yet to keep  
 The moonlight of the expired night asleep,  
 Through which the awakened day can never peep ; 555  
 A veil for our seclusion, close as Night's,  
 Where secure sleep may kill thine innocent lights ;  
 Sleep, the fresh dew of languid love, the rain  
 Whose drops quench kisses till they burn again.  
 And we will talk, until thought's melody 560  
 Become too sweet for utterance, and it die  
 In words, to live again in looks, which dart  
 With thrilling tone into the voiceless heart,  
 Harmonizing silence without a sound.  
 Our breath shall intermix, our bosoms bound, 565  
 And our veins beat together ; and our lips  
 With other eloquence than words, eclipse  
 The soul that burns between them, and the wells  
 Which boil under our being's inmost cells,  
 The fountains of our deepest life, shall be 570  
 Confused in passion's golden purity,  
 As mountain-springs under the morning Sun.  
 We shall become the same, we shall be one  
 Spirit within two frames, oh ! wherefore two ?  
 One passion in twin-hearts, which grows and grew, 575

In Shelley's edition, *ecstasy*, though the word is correctly spelt in line 39, p. 370.

Till<sup>1</sup> like two meteors of expanding flame,  
 Those spheres instinct with it become the same,  
 Touch, mingle, are transfigured; ever still  
 Burning, yet ever inconsumable:  
 In one another's substance finding food, 580  
 Like flames too pure and light and unimbued  
 To nourish their bright lives with baser prey,  
 Which point to Heaven and cannot pass away:  
 One hope within two wills, one will beneath  
 Two overshadowing minds, one life, one death, 585  
 One Heaven, one Hell, one immortality,  
 And one annihilation. Woe is me!  
 The wingèd words on which my soul would pierce  
 Into the height of love's rare Universe,  
 Are chains of lead around its flight of fire.--- 590  
 I pant, I sink, I tremble, I expire!

---

Weak Verses, go, kneel at your Sovereign's feet,  
 And say:—"We are the masters of thy slave;  
 "What wouldest thou with us and ours and thine?"  
 Then call your sisters from Oblivion's cave, 595  
 All singing loud: "Love's very pain is sweet,  
 "But its reward is in the world divine  
 "Which, if not here, it builds beyond the grave."  
 So shall ye live when I am there. Then haste  
 Over the hearts of men, until ye meet 600  
 Marina, Vanna, Primus,<sup>2</sup> and the rest,  
 And bid them love each other and be blest:  
 And leave the troop which errs, and which reproves,  
 And come and be my guest, --- for I am Love's.

<sup>1</sup> In Shelley's edition, '*Till*.'

<sup>2</sup> Marina is a pet-name of Mrs. Shelley's: Vanna is the diminutive of Giovanna (Joan or Jane), and might, as Mr. Rossetti hints, refer to Mrs.

Williams, to whom Shelley had been introduced shortly before sending off *Epipsychidion* to Mr. Ollier. I have seen no explanation offered as to Primus, and know of none.



STUDIES FOR EPIPSYCHIDION, AND CANCELLED  
PASSAGES.<sup>1</sup>

Here, my dear friend, is a new book for you ;  
 I have already dedicated two  
 To other friends, one female and one male,—  
 What you are, is a thing that I must veil ;  
 What can this be to those who praise or rail ? 5  
 I never was attached to that great sect  
 Whose doctrine is that each one should select  
 Out of the world a mistress or a friend,  
 And all the rest, though fair and wise, commend  
 To cold oblivion—though 'tis in the code 10  
 Of modern morals, and the beaten road  
 Which those poor slaves with weary footsteps tread  
 Who travel to their home among the dead  
 By the broad highway of the world—and so  
 With one sad friend, and many a jealous foe, 15  
 The dreariest and the longest journey go.

Free love has this, different from gold and clay,  
 That to divide is not to take away.  
 Like ocean, which the general north wind breaks

<sup>1</sup> Under the general title of "Fragments," Mrs. Shelley added, in her second edition of 1839, several exquisite "gleanings from Shelley's manuscript books and papers," the first of which, headed "To —," consisted of lines 1 to 37 and 62 to 91 of the ensuing group of Studies, &c. The rest were disentangled from the same sources by Mr. Garnett; and he printed the whole of them in his *Relics of Shelley*,—lines 1 to 141 under the very appropriate title *To His Genius*, (pp.

34 to 39), dated 1820, and lines 142 to 174 as four cancelled passages of *Epipsychidion*, all dated 1821, and being Nos. XXXII to XXXV of the "Miscellaneous Fragments" (pp. 86 and 87). It seems convenient to number the whole consecutively in this edition, as an addendum to *Epipsychidion*. The portions dated 1820 (lines 1 to 141) are obviously approaches to that most glorious poem,—metre and method being alike identical in these and that, and indeed whole passages being also

Into ten thousand waves, and each one makes 20  
 A mirror of the moon—like some great glass,  
 Which did distort whatever form might pass,  
 Dashed into fragments by a playful child,  
 Which then reflects its eyes and forehead mild;  
 Giving for one, which it could ne'er express, 25  
 A thousand images of loveliness.

If I were one whom the loud world held wise,  
 I should disdain to quote authorities  
 In commendation<sup>1</sup> of this kind of love:—  
 Why there is first the God in heaven above, 30  
 Who wrote a book called Nature, 'tis to be  
 Reviewed, I hear, in the next Quarterly;  
 And Socrates, the Jesus Christ of Greece,  
 And Jesus Christ himself did never cease  
 To urge all living things to love each other, 35  
 And to forgive their mutual faults, and smother  
 The Devil of disunion in their souls.

\* \* \* \* \*

I love you !—Listen, O embodied Ray  
 Of the great Brightness; I must pass away  
 While you remain, and these light words must be 40  
 Tokens by which you may remember me.  
 Start not—the thing you are is unbetrayed,  
 If you are human, and if but the shade

identical; but there is a tone of gentle sarcasm which, appearing in these approaches, had wholly worked off in the progress of the poet's mind towards the fervent and most earnest raptures of the ultimate poem. The fragment *Fiordispina*, doubtless, may also be regarded as a "preliminary though unconscious" study for *Epipsychidion*, as Mr. Garnett says, at p. 29 of *Relics*

of *Shelley*; but that fragment, and *Ginevra*, which also has some reference to Emilia Viviani, are different in method from these, and would not follow so appropriately here as in their place in the general distribution of posthumous poems.

<sup>1</sup> So in *Relics of Shelley*; but in Mrs. Shelley's edition we read *In the support of &c.*

Of some sublimer spirit.

\* \* \* \* \*

And as to friend or mistress, 'tis a form ;	45
Perhaps I wish you were one. Some declare	
You a familiar spirit, as you are ;	
Others with a more inhuman	
Hint that, though not my wife, you are a woman,	
What is the colour of your eyes and hair ?	50
Why, if you were a lady, it were fair	
The world should know—but, as I am afraid,	
The Quarterly would bait you if betrayed ;	
And if, as it will be sport to see them stumble	
Over all sorts of scandals, hear them mumble	55
Their litany of curses—some guess right,	
And others swear you're a Hermaphrodite ;	
Like that sweet marble monster of both sexes,	
With looks so sweet and gentle that it vexes	
The very soul that the soul is gone	60
Which lifted from her limbs the veil of stone.	

\* \* \* \* \*

It is a sweet thing, friendship, a dear balm,	
A happy and auspicious bird of calm,	
Which rides o'er life's ever tumultuous Ocean ;	
A God that broods o'er chaos in commotion ;	65
A flower which fresh as Lapland roses are,	
Lifts its bold head into the world's frore <sup>1</sup> air,	
And blooms most radiantly when others die,	
Health, hope, and youth, and brief prosperity ;	
And with the light and odour of its bloom,	70
Shining within the dungeon and the tomb ;	
Whose coming is as light and music are	

<sup>1</sup> In *Relics of Shelley*, the word here is *pure*. Mr. Rossetti's emendation *frore* is absolutely certain ; and he states that Mr. Garnett concurs in it.

'Mid dissonance and gloom—a star  
 Which moves not 'mid the moving heavens alone—  
 A smile among dark frowns—a gentle tone 75  
 Among rude voices, a belovèd light,  
 A solitude, a refuge, a delight.  
 If I had but a friend! Why, I have three  
 Even by my own confession; there may be  
 Some more, for what I know, for 'tis my mind 80  
 To call my friends all who are wise and kind,—  
 And these, Heaven knows, at best are very few;  
 But none can ever be more dear than you.  
 Why should they be? My muse has lost her wings,  
 Or like a dying swan who soars and sings, 85  
 I should describe you in heroic style,  
 But as it is, are you not void of guile?  
 A lovely soul, formed to be blest and bless:  
 A well of sealed and secret happiness;  
 A lute which those whom Love has taught to play 90  
 Make music on to cheer the roughest day,  
 And enchant sadness till it sleeps?

\* \* \* \* \*

To the oblivion whither I and thou,  
 All loving and all lovely, hasten now  
 With steps, ah, too unequal! may we meet 95  
 In one Elysium or one winding sheet!

If any should be curious to discover  
 Whether to you I am a friend or lover,  
 Let them read Shakspeare's sonnets, taking thence  
 A whetstone for their dull intelligence 100  
 That tears and will not cut, or let them guess  
 How Diotima, the wise prophetess,  
 Instructed the instructor, and why he

Rebuked the infant spirit of melody  
 On Agathon's sweet lips, which as he spoke 105  
 Was as the lovely star when morn has broke  
 The roof of darkness, in the golden dawn,  
 Half-hidden, and yet beautiful.

I'll pawn  
 My hopes of Heaven—you know what they are worth—  
 That the presumptuous pedagogues of Earth, 110  
 If they could tell the riddle offered here  
 Would scorn to be, or being to appear  
 What now they seem and are—but let them chide,  
 They have few pleasures in the world beside;  
 Perhaps we should be dull were we not chidden, 115  
 Paradise fruits are sweetest when forbidden.  
 Folly can season Wisdom, Hatred Love.

\* \* \* \* \*

Farewell, if it can be to say farewell  
 To those who—

\* \* \* \* \*

I will not, as most dedicators do, 120  
 Assure myself and all the world and you,  
 That you are faultless—would to God they were  
 Who taunt me with your love! I then should wear  
 These heavy chains of life with a light spirit,  
 And would to God I were, or even as near it 125  
 As you, dear heart. Alas! what are we? Clouds  
 Driven by the wind in warring multitudes,  
 Which rain into the bosom of the earth,  
 And rise again, and in our death and birth,  
 And through our restless life, take as from heaven 130  
 Hues which are not our own, but which are given,

And then withdrawn, and with inconstant glance  
Flash from the spirit to the countenance.  
There is a Power, a Love, a Joy, a God  
Which makes in mortal hearts its brief abode, 135  
A Pythian exhalation, which inspires  
Love, only love—a wind which o'er the wires  
Of the soul's giant harp—  
There is a mood which language faints beneath;  
You feel it striding, as Almighty Death 140  
His bloodless steed.

\* \* \* \* \*

And what is that most brief and bright delight  
Which rushes through the touch and through the sight,  
And stands before the spirit's inmost throne,  
A naked Seraph? None hath ever known. 145  
Its birth is darkness, and its growth desire;  
Untameable and fleet and fierce as fire,  
Not to be touched but to be felt alone,  
It fills the world with glory—and is gone.

\* \* \* \* \*

It floats with rainbow pinions o'er the stream 150  
Of life, which flows, like a dream  
Into the light of morning, to the grave  
As to an ocean.

\* \* \* \* \*

What is that joy which serene infancy  
Perceives not, as the hours content them by,<sup>1</sup> 155  
Each in a chain of blossoms, yet enjoys

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Garnett sets the word *sic* against this line, as if he regarded it with suspicion; but I do not doubt its being as Shelley meant it. I take the expression "as the hours content

them by" to mean "as the hours content themselves along,"—the curious reflective verb *content them by* being used as an equivalent for *pass by contentedly*.

The shapes of this new world, in giant toys  
Wrought by the busy                    ever new ?  
Remembrance borrows Fancy's glass, to show  
These forms more                    sincere                    160  
Than now they are, than then, perhaps, they were.  
When everything familiar seemed to be  
Wonderful, and the immortality  
Of this great world, which all things must inherit,  
Was felt as one with the awakening spirit,                    165  
Unconscious of itself, and of the strange  
Distinctions which in its proceeding change  
It feels and knows, and mourns as if each were  
A desolation.

\*                    \*                    \*                    \*                    \*

Were it not a sweet refuge, Emily,                    170  
For all those exiles from the dull insane  
Who vex this pleasant world with pride and pain,  
For all that band of sister-spirits known  
To one another by a voiceless tone ?







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